

Before the  
United States Senate  
Committee on Indian Affairs

**Hearings Regarding  
Native American Program Initiatives  
at the College and University Level**

Statement of  
**Dr. Ken Pepion**                      **and**                      **Prof. Joseph P. Kalt**  
**Executive Director**    **Faculty Chair**

**Harvard University Native American Program**  
**Harvard University**  
June 21, 2001

---

We thank you for the opportunity to appear here today. We represent the Harvard University Native American Program and its affiliated projects. In addition, Prof. Kalt serves as co-director of the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development. We would like to take this opportunity to describe the efforts underway at Harvard as the University reinvigorates its commitment to American Indian issues, students, leaders, and nations. Recent investment in the University's efforts make this an important and exciting time that holds the promise of bringing Harvard's considerable resources to bear in a positive way on the challenges of nation building in Indian Country.

Over its long history, Harvard University has been inconsistent in its attention and commitment to Native issues. Yet, its founding Charter of 1650 dedicates Harvard to "the education of English and Indian youth". Now, at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the leadership of the University has renewed its commitments and is staunchly supporting the development of teaching, research, and outreach aimed at



Statement of Dr. Kenneth Pepion and Prof. Joseph P. Kalt  
Harvard University Native American Program

contributing positively to Indian Country. We know it is surprising to many people to find out how much is happening at Harvard when it comes to Indian issues, but the University is stepping forward in important and strategic ways. Let us describe those briefly



## **I. HUNAP: A New “Interfaculty Initiative”**

In April 2000, the Provost of the University designated the Harvard University Native American Program (HUNAP) as one of Harvard’s ten Interfaculty Initiatives. As an Interfaculty Initiative, HUNAP brings together resources, faculty, and students from across the University in a shared commitment to research, academic achievement, and public service that advances the well-being of indigenous peoples through self-determination. This focus on self-determination reflects the salient trait of the challenges faced by Native leaders, officials, and policymakers today, and the strategic vision of HUNAP is focused on the challenges of building Native nations that can effectively promote the social, political, and economic well-being of their citizens and communities.

HUNAP operates under the direct supervision of its executive director, Dr. Pepion. He is supported by a Faculty Advisory Board consisting of faculty and senior administrators from all of the University’s schools, ranging from the undergraduate college to the graduate schools in law, medicine, business, government, public health, and education. An external advisory council brings together Native leaders and alumni, as well as other supporters with strong records of knowledge and involvement in Indian affairs. The advisory council provides HUNAP with indispensable links to the concerns of Indian Country and Native communities. The



central University administration provides direct financial support for HUNAP's core operations. Support for HUNAP and its affiliated projects also comes from committed individuals and concerned private foundations (such as the Christian A. Johnson Endeavor Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and the Rockefeller Foundation).

The firm institutional base of HUNAP has enabled us to build the key infrastructure that is needed to move Native American matters into the teaching, research, outreach, and student recruiting that are at the core of a great university. Our efforts are founded on the beliefs that any work that the University does in this field should be able to make a difference in the real world in which indigenous people are addressing the problems and opportunities that confront them; that the University's role is to provide resources when requested rather than unwelcome dictated solutions; and that the learning of students and researchers cannot be served by staying in the ivory tower of academe. With these principles in mind, we are now moving forward across a diverse array of programs and activities. These include:

- **The Scholars Program.** HUNAP's Scholars Program now supports pre-doctoral fellows, visiting Professional Fellows, and a visiting Senior Faculty Fellow. The pre-doctoral "1665 Fellows" (after the graduation date of Harvard's first Native student) have the opportunity to discuss their research in a collegial atmosphere, and to participate in a weekly seminar chaired by the Senior Fellow. This community of scholars, focusing on Native American issues, brings vitality to all aspects of HUNAP. Importantly, the Scholars Program makes Harvard a much more attractive graduate school alternative for the young Native scholars who will go on to make careers as academics, researchers, and professionals across a wide array of disciplines.



- **Student Enrichment.** Student support continues to be a major function of HUNAP. As a focal point for Native American student activity at Harvard, a dedicated facility (Read House) provides a gathering place for intellectual and cultural exchange. Through the office of the Program Coordinator, Mr. Lee Bitsoi, HUNAP works with Harvard's various recruitment and admissions offices to increase the number of Native Americans applying to and enrolling at the University. We are expanding our recruiting efforts and increasing financial aid, which is so critical to making it possible for qualified Native students to enroll and survive at Harvard.
  
- **Teaching and Curriculum.** HUNAP supports numerous courses focused exclusively on Native American issues, and a growing number of courses that include Native content. Highly successful offerings in *Native Americans in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Nation Building I and Nation Building II* are open to graduate and undergraduate students from throughout Harvard. The curriculum focuses on the challenges of decision makers in Indian Country today, but grounds discussions of tribal government, federal policy, economic development, social programs in Indian law, history and culture. The *Nation Building II* course offers students the unique opportunity to develop a research report on a real-world problem as brought to HUNAP in requests from tribes and other Indian organizations. Recent projects have included:
  - ♦ Huron Potawatomi – Governmental Reform for Economic Development
  - ♦ Mescalero Apache – Employment and Retention of Apache College Graduates
  - ♦ Cheyenne River Sioux – Development of Youth Recreational Facilities
  - ♦ American Indian Women's Business Association – Strategic Plan



- ♦ Hualapai – Creation of a Hualapai Department of Justice
- ♦ Poarch Creek Muscogee – Tribal Political History
- ♦ White Mountain Apache – Fisheries Management for Self-Determination and Economic Development
- ♦ Hopi – Development of Technology Policy for Hopi Institutions
- ♦ White Earth – Education Strategies for Hearing-Impaired Students
- ♦ Tribal Environmental Protection Agencies – Protocols for Development of TEPA Programs
- ♦ Diné College – Development of an Economic Research Initiative
- ♦ White Mountain Apache – Job Search Curriculum for the Strong Fathers Program
- ♦ Massachusetts Dept. of Indian Affairs – Options for a Statement of Apology or Reconciliation

With the agreement of the organization requesting the *Nation Building II* research projects, the results of these projects are widely disseminated throughout Indian Country in recognition of the fact that many Native leaders are struggling with similar challenges.

In addition to the *Nation Building* courses, HUNAP offers the 1665 *Graduate Research Seminar* for researchers from throughout the University to share ideas and results. The course on *Critical Issues in the Education of Native Americans* in our Graduate School of Education provides insight into the policy, organizational, and curricular frontiers of Indian education. Similarly, the Law School annually offers a modular course on American Indian law (most recently taught by Prof. Rob Williams of the University of Arizona). A new initiative pilots (with Hopi high school students) an effort to expose Native students to medical fields, science, and mathematics during a summertime program at Harvard. Additional curricular offerings are high on HUNAP's agenda, and the Program is emphasizing the need to find first-rate Native faculty.



- **Outreach.** Through *Honoring Contributions in the Governance of American Indian Nations* (Honoring Nations), a nationally prominent program of HUNAP's Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, tribal organizations are recognized for innovative and exemplary contributions to Indian Country. The Harvard Project plays the critical role of researching and disseminating lessons drawn from Honoring Nations honorees. The Harvard Project and Honoring Nations are described more fully below.

HUNAP also supports a growing number of outreach efforts that address vital needs of Native American and First Nations communities. The Nation Building II course enables students from all parts of the University to engage in field-based research on problems identified by tribes and other Native organizations – with resulting projects contributing directly to the requesting organizations' decision making capacities.

- **Research.** HUNAP continues to expand its research efforts, reaching across issues and across the University to contribute research of use to scholars, educators, policy makers, and Native leaders. Examples of current research efforts being conducted under the auspices of HUNAP include the widely utilized work of the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, which consistently finds that the effective exercise of sovereignty, combined with capable and culturally-grounded institutions of self-government, are indispensable keys to successful, long-term development of Native communities (see further below). Working with the Onigaming First Nation of Canada, HUNAP researchers are studying strategies for improving the education of Native youth while recognizing desires for self-determination by First Nations. The Comprehensive Indian Resources for Community and Law Enforcement project is



supported by the US Department of Justice and entails evaluation of integrated federal funding for tribal justice programs and related comprehensive program planning by Indian nations. Working with the Kennedy School's Carr Center on Human Rights, HUNAP is engaged in case-based research into intergovernmental dispute resolution involving Indian nations and neighboring counties, cities, and states. Research results will serve as inputs to conflict resolution efforts underway in Idaho between the Nez Perce Tribe and its neighboring government entities.

- **Executive Education.** HUNAP sees nation building in Indian America as the pressing challenge for Native leaders and decision makers. In perhaps the typical case, however, leaders and decision makers have little opportunity to avail themselves of the kinds of mid-career education that corporate and government leaders can so readily access. At the same time, the issues and decisions confronted in Indian Country span the range from business to government to nonprofit policy. HUNAP thus sees a critical need in the area of executive education.

With HUNAP's integrating focus on nation building, the Program is uniquely situated – and in much demand – as a provider of high quality executive education for Indian Country. HUNAP has already developed and provided programs on matters ranging from dispute resolution and constitutional reform to health policy and business development. Tribes and other organizations that have been provided with executive education programs have included the Navajo Nation, the Crow Tribe of Montana, the Oglala Sioux Tribe, the Fort Peck Assiniboiné and Sioux Tribes, the Swinomish Nation, the Indian Health Service, Minnesota Public Radio, and the Banff Center for Leadership and Management.





## II. **The Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development**

One of HUNAP's primary programs in Indian Country is the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development. The Harvard Project was originally founded and directed by Prof. Kalt and Prof. Stephen Cornell (now director of the Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy at the University of Arizona), with Dr. Manley Begay (now at the University of Arizona's Native Nations Institute) subsequently joining as a co-director. Since its beginning in 1987, the Harvard Project has sought to understand the conditions under which sustained, self-determined social and economic development is achieved among American Indian nations. The Harvard Project's central activities include research and the application of research results in service to Indian Country.

- **Key Findings:** The heart of the Harvard Project is the systematic, comparative study of social and economic development on American Indian reservations. What development strategies work, where and why? The Project's field-based research in Indian Country consistently finds that the effective exercise of sovereignty, combined with capable, culturally appropriate institutions of self-government, are indispensable keys to successful, long-term development. Among the key findings are:





- ♦ ***Sovereignty Matters.*** When tribes make their own decisions about what approaches to take and what resources to develop, they consistently outperform non-tribal decision makers. Because tribes bear the consequences of their governments' decision-making - whereas federal agencies, non-tribal developers, state governments and other outsiders do not - tribes that make their own development decisions do better. Harvard Project research on topics as diverse as timber operations under PL 93-638 and Indian Health Service programs under self-governance compacts prove the point.
- ♦ ***Institutions Matter.*** Harvard Project research shows that successful tribal governments share a set of core institutional attributes. They settle disputes fairly, separate the functions of elected representation and business management, and successfully implement tribal policies that advance tribal strategic goals. Fair dispute resolution – a rule of law – is essential to the accumulation of human capital, physical infrastructure and investment finance because it sends a signal to investors of all kinds that their contributions will not be used inappropriately or taken over unfairly. Separating business and government is critical because many Indian businesses are government-owned. Finally, effective administration is a feature of successful tribes because, without it, legitimacy deteriorates and sovereignty is eroded as opportunities go untapped or other powers fill the vacuum left by weak tribal government.
- ♦ ***Culture Matters.*** Not long ago, it was widely believed that acculturation was a means to development. Indians, they argued, would develop as soon as they shed their “Indian-ness.” Research by the Harvard Project finds exactly the opposite: Indian culture is a resource that strengthens tribal



government and has concrete impacts upon such bottom-line results as forest productivity and housing quality. Not only does culture provide important institutional resources, but a match between institutions of government and culture is critical to success.

Results of Harvard Project research are published widely. Summary treatments are provided in “Reloading the Dice: Improving the Chances of Economic Development on American Indian Reservations,” in *What Can Tribes Do? Strategies and Institutions in American Indian Economic Development* (edited by Cornell and Kalt, American Indian Studies Center, UCLA, Los Angeles, California) and in “Sovereignty and Nation-Building: The Development Challenge in Indian Country Today,” vol. 22, no. 3, of the *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*. More than 100 topical and tribe-specific reports are available through the Harvard Project’s Report Series. These papers provide valuable tools for decision makers in government, business, education and other aspects of Indian affairs.

- **Services to Tribes and Tribal Organizations:** Reflecting the same principles that guide other HUNAP efforts, the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development works extensively with tribes and tribal organization through several avenues:
  - ♦ **Research** – The Harvard Project offers research services at the request of tribes and tribal organizations. With the assistance of faculty, graduate students and research assistants at Harvard University’s John F. Kennedy School of Government, the Project investigates development and other policy-related issues of concern to tribes and Native communities. Research services have been provided in response to requests from a wide range of



organizations and tribes, including the Navajo Nation, Ho-Chunk, Wampanoag, the Alaskan Federation of Natives, Fort Peck, White Mountain Apache, the Arizona Indian Gaming Association, the Crow Tribe of Montana, Fond du Lac, Hopi, Cochiti Pueblo, the Oglala Sioux Tribe, Hualapai, Fort Berthold, the Native American Indian Center of Boston, and many others. Research results derived from fieldwork are key ingredients in the broader research findings published by the project.

- ♦ ***Executive Education*** – We provide executive education sessions with individual tribes and First Nations, involving Native leaders, project managers and other personnel in a review of Harvard Project research findings and in discussions of the applicability of those findings to specific tribal or First Nation situations and development challenges. Executive education programs are focused on constitutional reform, economic development, and strategic management. A new strategic partnership with the Native Nations Institute at the University of Arizona (see further below) is designed to expand the capability of the Harvard Project to deliver executive education to Native leaders and decision makers.
- ♦ ***Advisory Services*** – Harvard Project personnel consult with tribes and tribal organizations on a wide array of issues, from strategic planning to the development of governing institutions to assisting with economic development decisions. These services are provided on a *pro bono* basis.
- ***Honoring Contributions in the Governance of American Indian Nations:*** Honoring Nations was created in 1998 by the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development. It is an annual awards program that identifies, celebrates and shares outstanding examples of self-governance among American Indian nations in the United States. Honoring Nations is supported by



the Ford Foundation, which is a resource for innovative people and institutions worldwide. Supplemental support is provided by the Rockefeller Foundation.

Modeled after successful governmental "best practices" programs in Brazil, the United States, and the Philippines, Honoring Nations spotlights American Indian tribal government programs, practices, and initiatives that are especially effective in addressing key needs, problems, and challenges facing American Indian nations. Honorees are selected through a competitive process on the basis of the effectiveness, creativity, transferability, significance, and sustainability. The program is directed by Mr. Andrew Lee, executive director of the Harvard Project, and is guided by an advisory board comprised of experienced leaders from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors in Indian Country.

Honoring Nations is founded on the research of the Harvard Project, which finds that Indian tribes' ability to create and sustain effective governing institutions is essential for breaking cycles of dependence and building healthy, prosperous nations. By celebrating and sharing "ideas that work" in tribal governance, Honoring Nations seeks to provide best practices education and information to tribal leaders and public administrators of the more than 550 Indian nations in the United States. At the same time, Honoring Nations seek to shift focus from what doesn't work to what does work in tribal self-governance, reinforcing pride and confidence in the ability of tribal governments to make positive contributions to the well-being of their respective communities and citizens.

The honorees in the first two years of Honoring Nations have spanned the complex challenges of nation building activities in Indian Country, with program areas represented ranging from health care, education, and wildlife management



to constitutional reform, cultural affairs, and economic development. These truly outstanding examples of self-rule represent best practices not only in Indian Country, but among nations everywhere.

- **Strategic Partnerships – The Native Nations Institute:** In partnership with the Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy at the University of Arizona, the Harvard Project has supported the creation in 2001 of *The Native Nations Institute for Leadership, Management, and Policy* at the University of Arizona. The Native Nations Institute serves as a self-determination, development, and self-governance resource to indigenous nations in the United States, Canada, and elsewhere. It addresses the challenges of indigenous nation building through:
  - ♦ **Leadership and Management Programs** providing customized education for present and future leaders of American Indian and other Native nations;
  - ♦ **Policy Analysis** on issues of critical importance to those nations;
  - ♦ **Basic Research** on the foundations of sustainable, self-determined, economic and community development;
  - ♦ **Collaborative Relationships** with Native nations and organizations.

At the heart of the Native Nations Institute's educational activities is the common curricular focus on nation building that emerges from the research of the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development: developing indigenous capacities for the effective exercise of sovereignty and the effective pursuit of comprehensive economic and community development. Core curricular elements include institutional development and design, strategic thinking and policy, effective leadership and management, and the construction of productive relationships with other governments and constituencies. With the University of Arizona's institutional commitment, extensive Native and non-Native faculty



focused on Indian issues, and locational advantages vis-à-vis Indian Country, the Native Nations Institute provides the Harvard Project with a strategic mechanism for maximizing the ability of the Project to provide research results to Native leaders, managers, and decision makers. We believe pursuing such a goal is a proper role for Harvard University.

